

Message Text

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USCINCEUR

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MBFR VIENNA 0055

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: FRG ATTITUDE TOWARDS MBFR-NEED FOR MORE STRESS ON
THE POSITIVE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE NATO ALLIES OF THE UNITED STATES
ORIGINALLY ACCEPTED THE MBFR PROJECT WITH SOME
RESERVE AS A MEANS OF CUSHIONING THE IMPACT OF POSSIBLY
UNAVOIDABLE US FORCE WITHDRAWALS FROM EUROPE. AS
ASSESSED FROM THE POSITIONS THEIR REPRESENTATIVES HAVE
TAKEN AT BRUSSELS, IN CAPITALS, AND IN VIENNA, THERE HAS
BEEN SOME POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE VIEWS OF THE UK,
NETHERLANDS AND BELGIUM DURING THE COURSE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. HOWEVER, THE ATTITUDE OF THE FRG CONTINUES
CAUTIOUS AND CONSERVATIVE. WE SUGGEST THAT IT MIGHT
BE USEFUL IF, IN THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH GERMAN OFFICIALS,
BOTH SENIOR US OFFICIALS AND THOSE CONCERNED WITH
MBFR ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS COULD AS APPROPRIATE STRESS

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SOME OF THE POSITIEV GAINS FOR THE FRG AND THE WEST

WHICH COULD ARISE FROM A SUCCESSFUL MBFR NEGOTIATION.
END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE THE PRELIMINARY ROUND OF THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS BEGAN IN JANUARY 1973, THERE HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THE ATTITUDES OF INDIVIDUAL NATO PARTICIPANT GOVERNMENTS. THE UK, WHICH WAS BY FAR THE MOST CONSERVATIVE OF THE NATO PARTICIPANTS DURING THE PREPARATORY ROUND AND WHICH CAUSED THE US CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY WITH REGARD TO THE STATUS OF HUNGARY, HAS GRADUALLY SHIFTED ITS POSITION FROM ONE OF SKEPTICISM TOWARD THE MBFR PROJECT AS A WHOLE, TO SKEPTICISM AND CAUTION AS REGARDS DETAILS. THE MAIN REASONS FOR THIS SHIFT HAVE BEEN CHANGE FROM A CONSERVATIVE TO A LABOUR GOVERNMENT MORE POSITIVELY DISPOSED TOWARDS ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS, AND INCREASING ECONOMIC PRESSURES ON THE UK DEFENSE BUDGET. A SIMILAR SHIFT HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THE CASE OF THE NETHERLANDS, WHOSE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO CHANGED, AND, TO A LESSER DEGREE, IN THE CASE OF BELGIUM. CANADA, TOO, HAS PLAYED A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE AND HAS USUALLY SUPPORTED US POSITIONS. EVEN LUXEMBOURG HAS CHANGED ITS POSITION AGAINST PARTICIPATING IN REDUCTIONS AND IS NOW WILLING IN PRINCIPLE TO REDUCE ITS FORCES IN A SECOND PHASE.

3. HOWEVER, THE POSITION AND ATTITUDE OF THE FRG HAS REMAINED AS CAUTIOUS AS IT WAS AT THE OUTSET OF THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS AND COULD BECOME MORE SO. FOR THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, A SUBSTANTIAL US TROOP PRESENCE IN THE FRG IS A MATTER OF FUNDAMENTAL NATIONAL SECURITY IMPORTANCE. FROM THE INCEPTION OF THE MBFR CONCEPT, IN WHICH THEY PARTICIPATED, THE FEDERAL GERMANS HAVE VIEWED THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS AS A MEANS BY WHICH THE US COULD DEAL WITH DOMESTIC PRESSURES FOR UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS. FOR THESE REASONS, THE FRG HAS CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED THE MBFR PROJECT. BUT, APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE USSR AND ITS POWER, AWARE OF SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD FEDERAL GERMANY, AND NERVOUS OVER THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF A CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE USSR CONCERNING FRG FORCES, THE FRG HAS FROM THE OUTSET OF THE
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VIENNA TALKS INSISTED ON A CAUTIOUS, DELIBERATE APPROACH TO ENABLE IT TO WEIGH POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR ITSELF AT EACH POINT.

4. THE VIENNA TALKS HAVE NOT SO FAR RESULTED IN PROGRESS TOWARDS AN MBFR AGREEMENT. BUT THEY HAVE ENTAILED A DETAILED EXAMINATION OF THE POSITIONS OF BOTH EAST AND WEST. IN THE COURSE OF THIS EXAMINATION, A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC

POINTS HAVE EMERGED WHICH HAVE GIVEN SHAPE TO EARLIER, GENERALIZED GERMAN APPREHENSIONS: THE GERMANS HAVE RECEIVED AMPLE DOCUMENTATION IN VIENNA FROM WARSAW PACT REPRESENTATIVES THAT A MAJOR SOVIET AND WARSAW PACT MOTIVATION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS IS TO CONTROL THE BUNDESWEHR AND ALSO TO SET LIMITS TO POSSIBLE WESTERN EUROPEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION AND A FEDERAL GERMAN ROLE IN IT. IT HAS BECOME APPARENT TO THE FRG THAT THE SOVIETS ATTACH GREAT WEIGHT TO SUCH MATTERS AS NATIONAL CEILINGS ON THE GERMANS, TO REDUCTION OF AIR FORCES, TO LIMITATIONS OF SOME KIND ON GERMAN ARMAMENTS, TO DISBANDMENT OF REDUCED GERMAN FORCES; AND EVEN TO APPLICATION OF STABILIZING MEASURES, IF ANY, TO THE FRG. IN ADDITION, WESTERN INTEREST IN VERIFICATION OF AN MBFR AGREEMENT HAS RAISED FOR THE GERMANS THE UNDESIRABLE PROSPECT OF SOVIET INSPECTION OF FEDERAL GERMAN TERRITORY.

5. AS SEEN FROM VIENNA, FRG SENSITIVITY ON ISSUES OF THIS KIND APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN INTENSIFIED BY SEVERAL OTHER FACTORS, WHICH INCLUDE REVIVAL OF A CERTAIN DEGREE OF GERMAN NATIONAL FEELING FROM ITS LOW AFTER WORLD WAR II, A DESIRE THAT THE FRG NOT BE PLACED IN AN INFERIOR POSITION VIS-A-VIS ITS FRENCH AND BRITISH PARTNERS IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, A COOLING OF POPULAR SUPPORT IN THE FRG FOR GERMAN EASTERN POLICY, AND A GROWTH OF SUPPORT FOR THE CDU OPPOSITION.

6. THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE NATURALLY EFFECTED THE ATTITUDE OF FRG LEADERS AND OFFICIALS TOWARD MBFR. THESE EFFECTS MIGHT HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT MITIGATED IF PROGRESS WERE BEING MADE IN THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. THEN, GERMAN OFFICIALS WOULD ALSO BE FOCUSING ON THE BENEFITS TO ALLIED POSITIONS FROM EASTERN MOVES AND WOULD TAKE A MORE BALANCED VIEW. THIS HAS NOT BEEN THE CASE, AND THE CONTINUED STALEMATE IN THE

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VIENNA TALKS HAS CAUSED FRG OFFICIAL ATTENTION TO BECOME FIXED ON THE COSTS RATHER THAN THE BENEFITS OF MBFR. IN VIENNA, THE GERMANS HEAR DAILY FROM EASTERN REPRESENTATIVES ABOUT EASTERN REQUIREMENTS WHICH COULD LIMIT THE FRG. MANY DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE ALLIANCE CONCERN POSSIBLE ALLIED MOVES TO MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS. THE CONTINUAL CONCENTRATION OF FRG OFFICIALS SOLELY ON POTENTIAL COSTS, RATHER THAN ON COSTS PLUS BENEFITS MAY IN TIME MAKE IT HARDER TO OBTAIN THEIR AGREEMENT TO STEPS NEEDED TO BRING PROGRESS TOWARD AN AGREEMENT.

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7. THIS SITUATION APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN AGGRAVATED BY THE FACT THAT, WITH THE DEPARTURE OF WILLY BRANDT FROM THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE, THERE IS APPARENTLY NOW NO ACTIVE PROTAGONIST OF THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS IN A HIGH POSITION IN THE GERMAN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OR TOP BUREAUCRACY. ALTHOUGH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT PLAYED AN ACTIVE ROLE IN FORMATIVE STAGES OF ALLIED POLICY ON MBFR, BOTH HE AND FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER ARE MORE PRAGMATIC MEN THAN THEIR PREDECESSORS AND ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH MORE URGENT PROBLEMS OF INFLATION, UNEMPLOYMENT AND ENERGY COSTS. AS SEEN FROM VIENNA, IN THE FEDERAL GERMAN BUREAUCRACY, ONLY DISARMAMENT COMMISSIONER ROTH IS A CLEAR SUPPORTER OF THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. BUT ABOVE HIM THERE IS NO ONE WHO GIVES CONTINUING IMPETUS TO THE NEGOTIATIONS. AND AROUND AND BELOW HIM, FEW GERMAN OFFICIALS SHARE HIS POSITIVE VIEWS.

8. MOVEMENT BY THE SOVIETS TOWARD THE ALLIED POSITION

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WHICH WOULD REFOCUS ATTENTION ON A POSITIVE OUTCOME IS PROBABLY THE ONLY DEVELOPMENT WHICH COULD DECISIVELY COUNTERACT THE DRAFT IN GERMAN VIEWS ON MBFR DESCRIBED HERE. IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT THE ALLIES WILL APPROVE MOVES WHICH COULD HAVE THAT EFFECT. IN THE INTERIM, WE SHOULD ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH SPECIFIC GERMAN CONCERNS IN AN UNDERSTANDING WAY. IT WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL IF US OFFICIALS WHO DEAL WITH GERMAN OFFICIALS AND PARLIAMENTARIANS, WHETHER IN GENERAL OR ON MBFR DIRECTLY, COULD MAKE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT ON APPROPRIATE OCCASIONS TO KEEP BEFORE THE EYES OF GERMAN DECISION-MAKERS SOME OF THE POSITIVE GAINS WHICH COULD ARISE FROM A SUCCESSFUL MBFR NEGOTIATION.

9. A LISTING OF THESE POTENTIAL BENEFITS FORMULATED WITH GERMAN ATTITUDES IN MIND FOLLOWS FOR POSSIBLE USE AS BACKGROUND:

A. SOME REDUCTION IN US FORCE LEVELS IN EUROPE STILL APPEARS UNAVOIDABLE IN THE LONG RUN. A SUCCESSFUL MBFR AGREEMENT COULD LIMIT THE POLITICAL, MILITARY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS ON WESTERN EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION OF US TROOP WITHDRAWALS FROM EUROPE.

B. A SUCCESSFUL AGREEMENT COULD PROVIDE A CLEARER RATIONALE FOR MAINTAINING US AND EUROPEAN FORCE LEVELS FOR THE FUTURE BY LINKING THEM DIRECTLY WITH WARSAW PACT FORCE LEVELS.

C. AN AGREEMENT WOULD INVOLVE EXPLICIT SOVIET ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF A CONTINUING US ROLE IN MAINTAINING SECURITY IN EUROPE AND CONTRIBUTE TO FUTURE STABILITY IN THIS SENSE.

D. FROM A MILITARY VIEWPOINT, A SUCCESSFUL AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES:
(1) IT COULD DECREASE THE RISK OF WAR IN AN AREA WHICH STILL HAS THE HIGHEST EAST-WEST CONFRONTATION OF FORCES.

(2) IT COULD REDUCE SOVIET GROUND FORCE SUPERIORITY IN CENTRAL EUROPE, DIMINISHING TEMPTATIONS FOR THE SOVIETS TO ATTACK AND THE ACCOMPANYING RISK
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OF ALLIED MOVES BASED ON MISCALCULATION.
(3) MOVING SUBSTANTIAL SOVIET FORCES AND TANKS FROM THEIR FORWARD POSITION BACK INTO THE USSR, PLUS A CONTRACTUAL BARRIER AGAINST INTRODUCING MORE SOVIET FORCES INTO THE REDUCTION AREA COULD DECREASE

THE RISK OF LARGE-SCALE SOVIET SURPRISE ATTACK WITH MINIMUM PREPARATION. (THIS IS THE CONTINGENCY MOST FEARED BY WESTERN EUROPEAN POLITICAL LEADERS, ESPECIALLY THE GERMANS.)

(4) BUILD-UP OF SOVIET FORCES FOR A MORE CONVENTIONAL ATTACK WOULD HAVE TO TAKE PLACE WITHIN THE USSR RATHER THAN IN THE FORWARD AREA, GIVING NATO SOME INCREASE IN VALUABLE WARNING TIME.

(5) BY MAKING CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE AT THE OUTSET MORE FEASIBLE, A SUCCESSFUL AGREEMENT WOULD BOLSTER THE CASE FOR CONTINUING WESTERN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE WESTERN CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE CAPABILITIES.

E. FROM A POLITICAL VIEWPOINT:

(1) A SUCCESSFUL AGREEMENT COULD SOMEWHAT DECREASE SOVIET CAPABILITY TO USE SOVIET MILITARY STRENGTH IN CENTRAL EUROPE AS A SOURCE OF POLITICAL PRESSURE ON WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS.

(2) IT COULD PROVIDE A BETTER BASIS FOR GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY THE FRG, AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION. DESPITE THE LACK OF REALISM OF SUCH IDEAS, APPREHENSIONS ABOUT THE RISK OF WAR FROM THE WEST STILL COLOR EASTERN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE FRG.

F. WITH REGARD TO THE USSR SPECIFICALLY:

(1) A SUCCESSFUL AGREEMENT COULDS PROVIDE SOME ENDURING INCENTIVE FOR SOVIET LEADERS TO CONTINUE A DETENTE POLICY.

(2) AT THE SAME TIME, IT COULD PROVIDE SOME INSURANCE AGAINST ABRUPT CHANGES IN SOVIET POLICY VIS-A-VIS THE WEST: BY STABILIZING THE WESTERN GEOGRAPHIC APPROACHES TO THE SOVIET UNION, IT WOULD PROVIDE A USEFUL ARGUMENT TO THOSE IN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WHO OPPOSED REVERSION TO A MORE HOSTILE SOVIET POLICY VIS-A-VIS THE WEST.

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(3) IT COULD PROVIDE NEW ARGUMENTS FOR THOSE IN THE USSR WHO WISH TO DEVOTE MORE RESOURCES TO CIVILIAN PRODUCTION AS DISTINGUISHED FROM THE MILITARY FORCES.

(4) IT COULD CONTRIBUTE IN A LIMITED WAY TO GRADUAL, POSITIVE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT BOTH IN THE USSR AND EASTERN EUROPE.DEAN

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